

Lynda Hammond **THE GARAGE SALE GAL**



I'm dreaming of... an Easy-Bake Oven **Lynda Hammond**

When I was little all I wanted for Christmas was an Easy-Bake Oven. I knew if I could come downstairs after Santa's visit and find that beautiful hunk of avocado green shiny metal under the tree I'd never ask for another thing.

I'm still waiting.

While I haven't given up hope that someday I might get my 1960s miniature appliance on December 25, I have expanded my search. A garage sale is where I just might come across my coveted cooking contraption. I even have my fantasy of how it all plays out:

The Dream Discovery

I walk up to a garage sale, not knowing what I'll come across but hoping it's something special. That's when I spot it. An Easy-Bake Oven sitting in a far off corner of the driveway beside an ab cruncher and a bunch of once-highly collectible Beanie Babies. Suddenly the sounds of the garage sale crowd fade away and it's only me and that beautiful oven. It beckons me. I buy it for just \$2. Of course, it comes unused in the original box with all the accessories--pans and such. I go home and bake a chocolate cake in the light-bulb-heated oven. I'm happy, elated. I taste my concoction. I'm sick now because the chocolate mix is original--50 years old! But I don't dwell on the negative. I finally have my dream Christmas gift.

Every year would pass without the oven under the tree. So, I'd ask my Mom why she refused me the joys of an Easy-Bake Oven. "Use the big oven in our kitchen. You're big enough."

Oh, the humanity.

I'm certain never getting that oven under the tree scarred me for life.

I don't cook now. I *can't* cook. And, if I try my hand in the kitchen, it's usually not pretty.

I've even set my kitchen on fire--- twice. They were small fires. Yes, the fire department came but nobody was hurt..just some damage to the BIG oven.

If only I'd had that tiny oven on which to practice my recipes. I'm sure it could've sharpened my skills in the kitchen. In fact, according to Wikipedia celebrity chefs, including Bobby Flay, got their start on an Easy-Bake Oven.

If there's something that's eluded you each holiday season try searching for it at a garage sale.

"If the items are no longer available in stores, garage sales may be one of the few places to find some things," says Gretchen Hermann, a garage sale fanatic in New York wrote her college dissertation on garage sales. "There's so much history at a garage sale. You find stuff that was popular back when..old yogurt makers and other consumer fads."

Christmas is just four days away. Maybe Santa will bring my "fad" this year. If not, I'll

continue perusing garage sales—where everyday is like Christmas anyway!



PHOTO BY LYNDA HAMMOND: The Garage Sale Gal and her brother, circa 1967 at Lazarus Department Store in downtown Columbus, Oh.

This is me at age 5 with my brother Mike, 6. I'm pretty sure—after I got done crying (hey, that beard scared me!)-- I asked Santa for an Easy-Bake Oven for Christmas that year. **MY**

FAVORITE FIND

Do you have a garage sale find you love? Something that makes you smile when you look at it? Share it with us. Send us your picture. Include your name, email address and phone number and email it to: Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Watch for the story of your treasure in this column!

Lynda Hammond is a former television anchor who left the anchor desk for the love of garage sales. Contact her at Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Lynda also does garage sale segments on 3-TV's Good Morning Arizona.

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I'll say a little prayer..

Lynda Hammond

Before Kelly Meeks goes garage saling she says a little prayer. Like a lot of us Kelly asks God for health, happiness and prosperity but she adds a few things to the list. “We’re a praying family and I pray for these small things. Some things people might think are frivolous in life. And it works.”

Boy does it ever.

Just listen to one of her garage sale experiences where it sure does sound like divine intervention played a role.

Let me give you some background first on this truly amazing story---it will give you goose bumps!

Recently, the freelance makeup artist was redecorating her house when she zeroed in on some wonderful things—from stores--- that would go perfectly with her new style; a dining table from Cost Plus World Market, \$800; a bookshelf from IKEA, \$200; and a couch from a furniture store, \$3,500. But the prices were just too high so Kelly had to skip the luxury items.

Fast forward nine months.

It’s a Friday morning and Kelly, a wife and mother of three is gearing up to go garage saling. “I’m a Christian. And that day I said ‘God, please help me find a table today and a bookshelf’.”

Table Talk

A few minutes later, Kelly pulled up to a garage sale in Mesa where a man was unloading furniture from his pickup truck. “I said ‘Oh my gosh is that a table?’ And sure enough it was *the* exact table I’d been wanting.” Kelly bought the long, rectangular, rustic table for just \$40 and the seller even delivered it to her house!

Shelve it

The next day, Kelly said another prayer and headed out again in search of bargains. After visiting dozens of sales Kelly’s SUV was filling up but she thought she’d go to a few more before heading home. And she’s glad she did. At the next sale she found the bookshelf. “I started laughing inside again. ‘I can’t believe it. This is getting crazy’,”. Kelly says she was thinking at the time. The bookshelf—the same one from IKEA—was marked \$80. Kelly offered the seller \$60 and got the deal.

Okay, so do you have goose bumps yet? Well, wait—it gets better.

Cozy Couch

Just when you think Kelly’s weekend couldn’t get any better—the creme de la crème, the icing on the cake: The couch. Moments after finding the bookshelf the Mesa resident was turning the corner to head back home when she went to one last sale. “I pulled up and saw the couch in the driveway. My heart started to flutter because I just couldn’t believe it.” That’s right, sitting in the driveway was *the* two-piece brown sectional sofa---the same one she’d wanted so badly months before in the store. Kelly was able to buy the couch and –bonus!—a matching chair for

\$1100 (not a real low price but certainly better than retail). “It was my best weekend ever—a gold mine. I thanked God. And I told my friends and family and I really think it was a faith booster for everybody. I think it shows you how much God wants to be a part of your life if you invite him in daily.”

By the way, the couch sellers also delivered!

Oh, and the dining table? Kelly’s mom is buying the matching chairs—on sale--as a Christmas gift for the family!

Wow!

Merry Christmas and may all your garage sales give you goose bumps!



(Pic provided by Cadence Meeks) Good things come to those who wait--and pray. Kelly Meeks, 33, sits on one of her favorite garage sale finds.

Talk to the Garage Sale Gal!

Do you have a question or comment about garage or estate bargain sales? Email the Garage Sale Gal: Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com.

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